

# “Who gave Hansal Mehta the right to make ‘Faraaz’?”

## Abinta Kabir’s mother retorts to Holey Artisan film

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Can you imagine the pain of witnessing your daughter’s last moments on the big-screen?

Ruba Ahmed, Abinta Kabir’s mother



The poster for ‘Faraaz’.

TRAILER OUT TODAY

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

“I have lost my only daughter in the most gruesome way possible. When I met with Hansal Mehta and asked him what gave him the right to make the movie, he told me that he wanted to tell the people of Bangladesh why this kind of tragedy should be avoided. Who gave him the right to judge? Is he Bangladeshi? How come an outsider gets to make a business out of a movie that ruins the image of our country?” said Ruba Ahmed, mother of Abinta Kabir, who was killed by militants in the Holey Artisan Attack on July 1, 2016.



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Yesterday, a press conference was held by the Abinta Kabir foundation, on the release of the Indian film *Faraaz*. 20 people, including Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, Abinta Kabir, Tarishi Jain and Ishrat Akhond, among others, lost their lives in the incident.

Two movies were made on it, including Bangladeshi filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s *Shonibar Bikel*, and Hansal Mehta’s Hindi film *Faraaz*. While Farooki’s project has been in limbo at the censor board for years, its Indian counterpart is set for release on February 3.

Recently, the trailer of the movie was released which received mixed responses from Bangladeshi audiences. People questioned the filmmaker for capitalising on a country’s personal tragedy, and making it in Hindi, which is not their native language.

The *Scam 1992* director was faced with severe criticism over the movie, but he defended the movie stating that it will “shine light on the immense courage and talk about the importance of humanity over violence.”

When the poster of the *Faraaz* was released last year, both Abinta and Tarishi’s family sent a legal notice to the Delhi High Court. However, the court dismissed it, stating that falls under public domain.

“I don’t understand the point of dragging a tragic incident from 2016, and making a movie about it. In the past 6 years, India has experienced many tragedies. Can’t they make a movie about them? We first got to know from sources back in 2019, that Mahesh Bhatt wanted to make a movie about the incident and that he might have come during that time to research the film,” said Ruba.

“However, he didn’t contact me. We sent him a letter to him, and he replied that he respects my decision, and won’t proceed with it. And then, suddenly in August, we got to see the poster for *Faraaz*, which greatly hurt us,” she said, visibly in anguish. “We were able to restrict the film for about 6 months, but then due to India’s ‘public domain’ clause, we couldn’t stop it. However, I have appealed to the Delhi High Court decision, and I will even go to Supreme Court. I will fight to ensure that the film doesn’t get to come to Bangladesh.”

“They changed Abinta’s name to Ayesha, Tarishi’s name to Tari, and my name to Rabeya. They have even used Tarishi’s father as well, but I can’t seem to remember his character’s name. They showed a riot scene where my daughter’s picture was also visible. Who gave them the right to invade our privacy,” she said.

While Ruba Ahmed reflected a lot

of anger towards the Bollywood film, she remained fairly tightlipped about Farooki’s *Shonibar Bikel*.

“I actually got to know about Farooki’s *Shonibar Bikel* while I was researching about the Hindi film. I have also sent a legal notice to Farooki, to which he sent me a reply. The movie is currently stuck at the censor board and so now it’s completely upon the Bangladeshi government as to what they want to do with the film,” said Ruba Ahmed.

The Abinta Kabir Foundation head pleadingly told the media that although she can’t stop the release of the film, she will request everyone to not allow the movie to come to OTT.

“Can you imagine the pain of witnessing your daughter’s last moment on big-screen. This movie should not come in OTT for the sake of our country and for my child. Please don’t let this movie come to Bangladesh. This type of personal tragedy should not be screened on Netflix or Amazon.”

Recently, Bangladeshi journalist Nuruzzaman Labu claimed that *Faraaz* has been adapted from his book *Holey Artisan: A Journalistic Investigation*, which was published in 2017.

When asked about the authenticity of the book, Ruba Ahmed was shocked, as she didn’t even hear of it.

“Was he there during the actual attack, did he witness the killings? In order to write an account of a tragic attack, you need to ask questions to the victim’s family. He didn’t contact me. When I asked Ishrat’s brother whether he was contacted by anyone regarding the incident, he said no as well,” said an enraged Ruba Ahmed. “I have even sent letters to the Italian Embassy, Japanese Embassy, and even Bangladeshi Embassy in India, but nobody came to them to ask about the actual facts. Then, how can people make a movie with no actual authentic facts?”

# NEWS

## Govt organs can’t interfere

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In the verdict, the top court scrapped the tribunal judgement that on April 12, 2010, directed the EC to reinstate 85 upazila election officers who were appointed during the tenure of the then alliance government led by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The EC had terminated them during the regime of the military-backed caretaker government on the grounds that they were appointed on political consideration and they could not pass the suitability test.

In the full text of the verdict, the SC said, “The respondents [85 terminated upazila election officials] could not

bring any materials on record from which it could be manifested that there was no allegation of misconduct against them, and an inquiry was held behind their back in pursuant to which they had been terminated from service during the probation period.

“Therefore, we are of the view that the Election Commission Secretariat was in right stand to arrange for a suitability test during the probation period of the respondents and on being unsuccessful in the suitability test the respondents had been terminated from service which we hold to termination simpliciter not stigmatic,” the apex court said.

## APBn not harassing

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reports after visiting and collecting more information,” he said.

On January 17, the HRW, in its report, alleged the APBn was committing extortion, arbitrary arrests, and harassment of Rohingya refugees with impunity.

The rights watchdog based its statements on interviews with over 40 Rohingya refugees, including 10 alleged victims who said they were

detained on apparently fabricated grounds of trafficking yaba.

Talking to reporters, the home boss said the Rohingyas have turned out to be a major headache for the country.

“Staying in the camps, they are involved in yaba dealing. They are involved in gunfights and killings... They brutally killed a DGFI official. There was a gunfight between two Rohingya groups even yesterday [Wednesday],” he said.

## Humanity was all

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Similarly, surgeons transplanted Sara’s eyes into Suzon, 30, and Ferdous Akter, 56, at the BSMMU and Sandhani Eye Hospital. One of them had acquired blindness while another had blindness since birth.

All the recipients are doing well, according to physicians.

Prof Habibur Rahman Dulal, a renal transplantation surgeon at the urology department at BSMMU, headed the kidney transplantation team at the BSMMU.

Speaking at the press conference, Habibur highlighted the misconception about cadaveric organ transplantation in the country.

“If cadaveric transplantation can be done on a big scale, thousands of lives can be saved. But we have a religious misconception which should be addressed,” he said.

Kidney transplantation from living donors began in the country in 1982. But taking a kidney from a clinically dead patient was legally restricted.

In 2018, the organ donation law was amended allowing collection of

organs from the clinically dead with consent from relatives.

Calling for normalising cadaveric organ donation, Prof Dr Harun Ur Rashid, chief consultant in nephrology at the National Kidney Foundation, said, “This is a very good start to the cadaveric kidney transplantation.”

He said that around 2,000-2,500 kidneys can be collected from around 5,000 deceased who die in road crashes each year. “If we can do this, we would be able to transplant 1-2 kidneys daily.”

He also praised the sacrifice of Sara and her family.

Speaking at the occasion, Sara’s mother Shobnom Sultana, a schoolteacher in the capital, said her daughter was a divine child to her and everyone closest.

“Sara wished that I would donate her organs for research... She believed in humanity,” Shobnom said.

Sara’s first namaz-e-janaza was held on the BSMMU mosque premises yesterday morning while the second one was held at Taqwa Mosque in Azimpur.

She was laid to eternal rest in the Azimpur graveyard.

## Why can’t govt

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vote is a fundamental aspect of the constitution; prohibiting government employees from voting in the parliamentary election right after retirement or resignation violates both the basic principles and the right to equality guaranteed by Article 27 of the Constitution.

A government official or a member of the armed forces becomes a regular citizen after leaving the service and preventing them from running for national elections through the RPO’s Section 12(1)(f) contradicts Article 27 of the Constitution, he said.

He went on to say that the right to vote and participate in elections to be elected as a representative of the people is at the core of the democratic process, as Article 11 of the Constitution guarantees people’s participation in administration at all levels through their elected representatives.

## Don’t enrol students

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University, City University, The Millennium University, and Bangladesh University.

The notification also mentioned that the six universities could not admit new students if they fail to move to their permanent campuses by April 1.

Six more universities were given until June 30 for their relocation to permanent campuses. The UGC made the decision as the universities made visible progress in building their permanent campuses and also made written commitments on relocation.

They are Brac University, the University of Development Alternative, Green University, Uttara University, Presidency University, and The People’s University of Bangladesh.

The universities will face similar restrictions if they cannot move to their permanent campuses by July 1.

Earlier, the UGC decided that private universities who would fail to shift to permanent campuses by December 2022 would not be allowed to enrol students from January 2023.

## Torture marks found on Gazipur trader’s

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phone number was written there, but it was switched off yesterday.

Police said Rabiul was hit by a truck on a road in Bhogra area.

Meanwhile, this correspondent talked to at least 10 people in Bhogra area about the accident but all of them said they did not hear anything.

“Normally, we pass most of our time on roads in this area. We did not get any news of such an accident on Tuesday night,” said Sajib, a rickshaw-van puller.

“Pedestrians are usually the first responders to accidents in most cases. In our area, such news passes

from one to another swiftly. However, we did not hear anything of this sort,” said a shopkeeper.

Several shop owners too echoed him.

Our correspondent in Rangpur reported that the entire Shahdatpur village in the district’s Pirganj upazila was engulfed by shock and sadness as Robiul’s body reached yesterday morning.

The body was buried around 10:30am amid tight security. Many villagers gathered there to see Robiul for the last time.

The correspondent tried to talk to several members of the victim’s

family over the phone. But none agreed to talk to the media.

“Now, we cannot talk over this issue,” said Robiul’s cousin Sawapan over the phone.

At least 12 people, including two cops, were injured as a mob clashed with police in Gazipur city’s Bhogra bypass area on Wednesday over the death.

The mob vandalised at least 20 vehicles, torched two motorbikes, and blocked the Dhaka-Mymensingh and Joydevpur-Jamalpur highways for about one and a half hours.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.]

## DB arrests four senior bankers

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S Alam Group is well-represented on the board of Social Islami Bank.

They were arrested from different areas in the capital on Wednesday, said Harun-or-Rashid, the chief of the Detective Branch, at a press briefing yesterday.

The arrestees have been spreading false information about Islami Bank.

“Islami Bank is a reputed bank. Few individuals have been attempting to destabilise the country’s financial sector by spreading false information about banks and financial institutions through social media and other means,” he added.

The arrestees are associated with Jamaat-e-Islami and Islami Chhatra Shibir, according to DMP’s news portal dmpnews.org.

Earlier on January 8, DB arrested five people, including a 70-year-old businessman and two minors, in connection with the case.

They are businessmen Mohammad Nur Un Nabi, Afsar Uddin Roman and Abu Sayeed Saju. The two minors are aged between 17 and 15.

Abdul Kuddus, a deputy manager of S Alam group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on January 5 under the Digital Security Act.

In the case, Kuddus accused Nabi and Golam Sarowar Mia, and Mazharul Islam alias Rasel, Saju and Roman had not been mentioned.

Police arrested Rasel on December 27 in another DSA case filed by an S Alam Group official with Double Mooring Police Station in Chattogram. Nabi and Mia were

accused in this case too.

Kuddus said he found posters demeaning S Alam Group on walls and pillars behind Nafi Tower in Gulshan-1 and its adjacent areas on December 22, according to the case statement.

Founded in 1985 by Muhammad Saiful Alam Masud Chowdhury, S Alam Group is one of the largest conglomerates in Bangladesh.

It has been in the news recently for its alleged borrowing of over Tk 30,000 crore from Islami Bank, where it has 26.73 percent stakes. The amount was way beyond the group’s entitled quota, prompting the High Court to order an investigation.

## Nazi gold sparks

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gold coins, believed to be worth 11 million euros (\$11.9 million) at current value.

“That means that all kinds of people have come to Ommeren to search for it,” says Tammes, 74, the former local mayor, inside his home built on the remains of a former Nazi headquarters.

“But it hasn’t been found.”

The Nazis allegedly looted the treasure after the bombing of a bank in Arnhem in 1944, but are then believed to have buried it after the Allied “Market Garden” offensive near the town.

A few steps from his home there are muddy holes from the excavations, along a tree-lined path and a shallow ditch consistent with the drawings on the map.

## Rapid scale-up

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also limit potential.

“If warming continues – and all signs say it will – then it will be even harder to maintain current levels of conventional CDR because they will be affected by droughts, storms, pests and other impacts,” said co-author Oliver Geden, a senior fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and an IPCC lead author.

That means novel CDR methods have to pick up the slack.

To keep warming under 2C, deployment of these nascent technologies must be ramped up 30-fold by 2030, and by more than 1,000-fold by 2100, according to the report, led by the University of Oxford.

## 2 more arrested

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His skeletal remains were recovered while the office space was being demolished to construct a new building.

Later, the landowners and locals informed the police.

On March 29, 2016, around 8:00pm, Rajeev called his father and told him that he was coming home to Khulna. Half an hour later, his phone was found switched off.

A few days later, his mother, Mabiya Begum, came to Jashore in search of her son and filed a general diary with the local police.

Rajeev’s father, Farooq Hossain and his brother, Hasmat, later filed a general diary with PBI’s Jashore office.